

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system, in which at least a portion of an exhaust passage means is integrally formed in a case member (41) having a drive shaft (50) accommodated therein for transmitting in driving force from an engine (E) to a propeller (52),

wherein openings (e_2 , e_4) of said exhaust passage means are defined in a generally upwardly and downwardly extending sidewall of said case member (41) which is disposed under an engine block (11), and an exhaust passage forming an exhaust silencing portion is defined between said case member (41) and a lid (48) which is detachably coupled to said sidewall of said case member to cover said openings (e_2 , e_4).

2. (Original): An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system according to claim 1, wherein an oil pan (41₁) for storing a lubricating oil for the engine (E) is integrally formed within said case member (41).

3. (Currently Amended): An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system having a swivel shaft for steering of the outboard engine system in which a catalytic converter for purifying an exhaust gas discharged from an engine is mounted in an exhaust passage for guiding the exhaust gas, the exhaust passage structure comprising:

at least a portion of the exhaust passage integrally formed in a case member which is disposed under an engine block to accommodate a drive shaft therein for transmitting a driving force from the engine to a propeller said case member being connected to said swivel shaft; and

a connection into which said exhaust passage opens, the connection being formed in a sidewall ~~side-wall~~ of said case member;

wherein said catalytic converter is disposed in a space surrounded by the case member and an exhaust passage-defining member so as to be held by the exhaust passage-defining member and a detachable lid, the exhaust passage-defining member being detachably coupled to said connection of the case member to permit the exhaust gas to flow thereinto.

4. (Previously Presented): An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system according to claim 3, wherein said catalytic converter is supported on said exhaust passage-defining member.

5. (Previously Presented) An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system according to claim 3, wherein said catalytic converter receives the exhaust gas flow from said case member via an opening in said exhaust passage-defining member communicating with the connection.

6. (Currently Amended): An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system having a swivel shaft for steering of the outboard engine system in which a catalytic converter for purifying an exhaust gas discharged from a 4-cycle engine is mounted in an exhaust passage for guiding the exhaust gas, the exhaust passage structure comprising:

at least a portion of the exhaust passage integrally formed in a case member which is disposed under an engine block to accommodate a drive shaft therein for

transmitting a driving force from the engine to a propeller said case member being connected to said swivel shaft; and

a connection into which said exhaust passage opens formed in a sidewall of said case member;

wherein said catalytic converter is disposed in a space surrounded by the case member and an exhaust passage-defining member so as to be held by the exhaust passage defining member, the exhaust passage defining member being ~~and a lid~~ detachably coupled to said connection of the case member exhaust passage-defining member; and

wherein said exhaust passage-defining member includes an opening to permit the exhaust gas to flow thereinto.

7. (Original) An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system, in which at least a portion of an exhaust passage means is integrally formed in a case member having a drive shaft accommodated therein for transmitting in driving force from an engine to a propeller;

wherein openings of said exhaust passage means are defined in a generally upwardly and downwardly extending sidewall of said case member which is disposed under an engine block, and an exhaust passage forming an exhaust silencing portion is defined between said case member and a lid which is detachably coupled to said sidewall of said case member to cover said openings.

8. (Original) The outboard engine system of claim 7, wherein an oil pan for storing a lubricating oil for the engine is integrally formed within the case member.